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Coal: What Future?

Arthur Horner makes outspoken comments on oil, decentralisation and the men behind it

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Have We The Leadership We Deserve?

Trade unionists must solve the problem of leadership and democracy, writes 'Vulcan', on the T.U.C.

CONGO, CUBA AND PEACE
Notes by R.P.D.

A BELGIAN VIEW
Pierre Joye

STRIKE FOR THE PENSIONERS!
George Hardy

FORTY YEARS
Bob Stewart

SEPTEMBER · 1960

One Shilling and Sixpence

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A THOUSAND CHANCES

ONE SATURDAY NIGHT twenty years ago this month, I went to the pictures; the film was *Night Train to Munich*. I came out to find a rain of incendiaries pouring down on deserted London streets, and the whole sky lit up by the blazing Surrey Docks. Hitler's Blitz had begun. Londoners heard the whistle of their first bomb and each held his breath—until the bomb crashed on some other victim. It took time to judge how close a stick of bombs might fall; we looked for assurance to International Brigaders, back from experiencing Nazi bombing amongst civilians in Spain. 'Cheer up!' said they sardonically. 'The ones you hear coming have missed you'. So Londoners began their underground life, which lasted over 200 consecutive nights, in air-raid shelters and Tube stations. I can see them now, packed solid on the Tube platforms, some of them quite homeless; a mother laying her baby to sleep in a suitcase for cradle; an old man crouched on his bundle of bedding, watching the trains go by, waiting for the last to pass, so that he could stretch out his bed-roll. That 'night train to Munich', that flight to Berchtesgaden of Lord Home and Mr. Macmillan's predecessor, had indeed reached its destination. Since nightly one building after another in Holborn was being demolished by bombs, some the 'giant' 1,000-lb. landmines, *Labour Monthly's* offices were moved six miles out from central London. Today, when a single nuclear bomb on Holborn would devastate these offices in far-off Finchley, Mr. Macmillan flies to Germany to discuss 'joint defence measures' with Adenauer, whilst H-bombers and spy planes circle above American bases on Britis[illegible] those in the Tube who told other bitterly: 'Never again!', I kn[illegible] nothing except that the baby in th[illegible] suitcase-cradle is now a young man, who goes on every possible march against American missile bases. He is one of those who serve 'Notice to Quit' on American forces; and he will certainly be on the March to the Labour Party Conference at Scarborough to which two readers refer in our 'Views of the World' this month. It is about young fellows like him that an *Essex* reader wrote: 'Please send extra copies for the next three months. I want them for my nephew who is greatly interested in peace. He's a bit of an individualist, perhaps, but he went on two Aldermaston marches, and helped to organise a protest lie-down at a base. He needs *L.M.*, I feel'.

It is interesting to hear from United States readers how the effect of world opinion is felt there. A *Florida* readers refers to 'what the Japanese people were trying to teach us in their June demonstrations; and now on our own doorstep valiant Cuba is hewing to the line. Surely the U.S. Government dare not attempt to crush this revolution as they did in Guatemala. The world watches!' Another describes radio reports from London, Italy, Paris and Japan 'about the general feeling in those countries regarding the present standing of the U.S. as a world power. I knew the facts, of course; but when I realised that literally millions were hearing it who had never heard it before—I felt ashamed!' From *California*: 'I could never be without *L.M.* in this day and age, the inspiring champion for peace and decent living standards for all humanity and all over the world'. He adds that he thinks it the best English-language periodical 'for strengthening the peace-loving forces of the world'. A *New Zealand*

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Notes of the Month

Congo, Cuba and Peace

> The hand of every European Power which has had dealings with him is stained deep with the blood of the African.
>
> E. D. MOREL, *The Black Man's Burden.*

THIS month we approach the twenty-first anniversary of the launching of the second world war in Europe. A dangerous moment. A new generation has grown up which knows nothing of the second world war and is taught only lies by the spate of war films. A new generation for the military butchers to delude with false slogans and send to destruction. Twenty-one years after the first world war Mussolini sent his *giovanezza* to invade Ethiopia, then the last remaining historic independent African state. That was a quarter of a century ago. Today the memory of Mussolini is the memory of the inverted corpse strung up by the anger of the Italian people, while the troops of Haile Selassie march in the name of the United Nations to defend the newly won independence of an African neighbour against the aggression of its old oppressor. We have reached the fifteenth anniversary of the end of the second world war. Fifteen years after the first world war Hitler was placed in power in Germany by the monopolists and militarists immediately after his electoral defeat by the German

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people with a loss of two million votes. Today the same monopolists and militarists, entrenched anew around Adenauer in the West German state; the Krupps and Thyssens, restored to their full possessions and power by the favour of the West; the selfsame generals of Hitler, placed at the head of the new Wehrmacht, now equipped with nuclear weapons; these proclaim anew already openly and publicly their offensive expansionist aims to re-establish the frontiers of Nazi Germany, and sedulously draw up their blueprints for their new blitzkrieg. Once again a British Conservative Premier makes the Munich pilgrimage, to be received at the airport with a welcoming umbrella, and with the selfsame docile acolyte who accompanied Neville Chamberlain on the preceding occasion, Lord Home, to provide the Missing Link.

Yes, there are plenty of ugly features in the present situation. To the old monsters have been added new ones. There is no lack of warning parallels. But yet the present situation is not the same today as then. And it is the difference that is decisive.

Mills of History

The mills grind slowly. But they grind exceedingly small. After all his crimes and bombast Hitler did end in the blazing Chancellery, tracked down by justice embodied in Soviet arms. All his lies and guile of the typical Western master of propaganda did not save Goebbels—even though his final 'Iron Curtain' formula bequeathed as his parting gift before death to organise the Western Cold War after 1945 still rattles every day today, fifteen years later, in every speech and every article of every political leader and journalist of the 'free world' to denote their fidelity to the Testament of Nazism. Syngman Rhee, to maintain whose bloodstained dictatorship all the legions of all the powers of the 'free world' invaded Korea only ten years ago, has at last been overthrown by the wrath of the Korean people and fled to take refuge under the protection of his American masters. Three decades after the sell-out of the *Daily Herald* by the T.U.C. to the millionaires, the last turn of the screw is revealing the ultimate outcome of this pioneer experiment in shareholding partnership with big business as the boasted solution of Labour's problems, now that Fifty One Per Cent Odhams is exercising its whip hand to demand the removal of the last figleaf of Labour affiliation. One quarter of a century after the assault on the last stronghold of African freedom, the living Haile Selassie triumphs over the dead Mussolini. And now

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Congo, Red Congo, the Congo of Red Rubber, the Congo of the greatest crimes of modern imperialism till Nazism, of millions slain and tortured and exterminated, has risen, has proclaimed independence, and is fighting tenaciously, shoulder to shoulder with brother African states, to maintain that independence and defeat the renewed attempts of imperialism, whether through direct armed assault or subtler penetration, to overthrow the hard won independence and dissect the living body of the risen giant.

Congo Atrocities

It was unwise of the Belgian Government and publicists to dare to speak of atrocities in the Congo. Do they really think that public memory is so short? Or that the world has forgotten those crimes without equal which first awakened universal consciousness at the dawn of this century to the horrors of modern imperialism, when the intrepid endeavours of noble-hearted fighters for humanity like E. D. Morel and Roger Casement penetrated the veil of darkness and laid bare the sickening record. 'The greatest crime in all history', in the words of Conan Doyle, can stagger even present-day imagination, which has supped full of horrors and plunged deeper and deeper into the abyss as imperialism has progressed. One single fact betrays the record. At the beginning of this century the population of Belgian Congo was varyingly estimated by different authorities at from twenty to thirty millions; the lowest estimate was twenty millions. Let us now take the lowest estimate. Today the population is thirteen millions. The loss of seven millions, one third of the population, and not even by forced migration as in the colonisation and depopulation of Ireland. Seven million unnatural deaths; seven millions wiped out, exterminated, in a short space of years; more, many more, if we allow for what would have been the normal increase of population. In relation to the size of population even the record of Nazism pales besides this.

Casement 'Diaries'

In this connection a footnote on Casement may be forgiven, since his memory is forever bound up with the revelation of the truth about the Belgian Congo. It is characteristic that even a third of a century later British officialism still seeks to blacken the memory of the Irish patriot Roger Casement by continuing to maintain the slanderous charges about the alleged 'diaries' produced by those

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self-vaunted masters of forgery, Admiral Sir Reginald Hall of Naval Intelligence in association with the Red-baiter Basil Thompson. In their successive conflicting versions of how and where they professed to have found these 'diaries' they have been as clumsy as the American Secret Service, in their successive conflicting versions over both the U2 and the RB47 (which latter they vainly searched for over the whole Arctic during ten days, and then when the Russians told them where and how it was brought down, pretended they had always known, in order to have the insolence to challenge the Soviet account). Latterly the secretive British authorities, till then so shy about producing any material evidence regarding the Casement 'diaries', but obviously itching from a guilty conscience, have after thirty-four years to hatch the latest brood, produced a new set of volumes as the really authentic version to permit limited inspection by selected witnesses. Unfortunately for this latest effort the Associated Press correspondent, Ben Allen, who was shown the original version of the alleged 'diaries' in 1916, has borne witness that this latest version does not correspond to the old ones which he was shown in 1916:

> Mr. Allen told *The Times* yesterday that the documents on exhibition in the Record Office were certainly not the ones which were shown to him in 1916 by the late Admiral Sir Reginald Hall of Naval Intelligence, and which he was then told was Casement's diary. . . . Mr. Allen said that Hall called him aside, presented him with the diaries and urged him to circulate them in America through the Associated Press.
>
> For several reasons . . . he was not satisfied that they were authentic. Mr. Allen said that he refused to use the material unless he was allowed to see Casement and to ask him whether he was the author. This he was not allowed to do.
>
> Mr. Allen said that what he was shown was a thick rolled manuscript . . . The sheets were at least twice the size of any of the exhibits now on display in the Record Office.
>
> (*The Times*, August 6, 1960.)

All this would be an old story for the masters in forgery who produced the Piggott forgeries to damn Parnell, the forged *Pravda* put out by Scotland Yard for the anti-Soviet campaign, or the forged 'Red Letter' to win a general election. The memory of Casement (however misled in his final desperate attempt to serve the cause of Ireland with the aid of another imperialism) can never be blackened from such dirty sources.

'Steeped in Blood'

The once prosperous Congo of abundance, described by early travellers, was laid waste by King Leopold's system of appropria-

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tion of its natural resources and murderous violence to compel the population to supply the insatiable demand for rubber and ivory in order to maintain the luxury of the palace favourites in Brussels, the corrupt Catholic politicians and the smug concessionaires in Paris, London and New York. Morel quotes the report of a Belgian merchant:

> There is not an inhabited village left in four days' steaming through a country formerly so rich: today entirely ruined.... The villages are compelled to furnish so many kilos of rubber every week.... The soldiers sent out to get rubber and ivory are depopulating the country. They find that the quickest and cheapest method is to raid villages, seize prisoners, and have them redeemed afterwards for ivory.

Letters of European agents employed by the Concessionaire Companies found their way into the papers. One such agent confessed to having killed 150 men, cut off 60 hands, crucified women and children and hung the remains of mutilated men on the village fence. He quotes the American missionary Clark:

> It is blood-curdling to see them (the soldiers) returning with the hands of the slain, and to find the hands of young children amongst the bigger ones evidencing their bravery.... The rubber from this district has cost hundreds of lives, and the scenes I have witnessed, while unable to help the oppressed, have been almost enough to make me wish I were dead. ... The rubber traffic is steeped in blood, and if the natives were to rise and sweep every white person on the Upper Congo into eternity, there would still be a fearful balance to their credit.

Prophetic words. What must be the memories in every family of every Congolese man and woman? The amazing thing is not that there may have been incidents of violence (and all the reporters are agreed that the main violence after liberation has come from the Belgian paratroopers who, in the words of *Time* correspondent, 'got out of hand', 'beat up any stray Africans they encountered', and were 'trigger-happy'). The amazing thing has been the nobility and tolerance of the wronged Congolese people towards their former oppressors once they have won their independence.

Profit and Loss

'Do Empires Still Pay?' asked the naïve John Strachey in his *End of Empire* last year. He proceeded to offer the conventional current official answer that, even if there was exploitation in the past, all this no longer applies to any significant extent to modern 'post-imperialist' capitalism. The Marxist analysis, he accordingly claimed, of the prosperity of the Western imperialist metropolitan centres of the 'free world' as based on a foundation of colonial

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plunder, exploitation and impoverishment no longer corresponds to the facts of the modern world. This opinion is evidently not shared by the Belgian Minister of Finance, Van Houtte; who, as soon as the revolt of the Congolese Force Publique revealed the collapse of the dreams of the Belgian monopolists to continue domination of the Congo under new forms, immediately announced to the panic-stricken Belgian parliament that the loss of Congo would bring the menace of financial catastrophe and devaluation of the franc and make it necessary to introduce at once emergency measures of 'financial austerity', increased taxation and all-round cuts in the standard of living of the Belgian population. Clearly Mr. Van Houtte had failed to study his Strachey.

Balance Sheet of Empire

There could be no more classic demonstration of the economics of modern imperialism (not 'post-imperialism') than the relations of Belgium and Congo. Did the exploitation come to an end when the autocracy of King Leopold was replaced on the eve of the first world war by the direct colonial rule of the Belgian state operating through the same octopus of the *Société Générale* (older than the Belgian State) and the great overseas monopolism, the *Haut Katanga* and the rest, linked with British and later also American monopoly interests? On the contrary, the exploitation became more scientific, more intensive. During the five years 1955-59, according to *The Economist* of August 6, 1960, Congo had to pay Belgium (deficit on the balance of payments with Belgium) £472,000,000, or £94,000,000 a year, or, allowing for re-investment in Congo, a net £422,000,000, while earning from the rest of the world, in dollars, sterling or other currencies, £322,000,000, and having to cover the remainder from reserves previously accumulated. Thus the vast dollar earnings from Congo resources and labour all went to build up the prosperity of the Belgian economy. Other estimates have given a higher figure for the net return to Belgium from Congo; thus the *U.S. News and World Report* (August 1, 1960) has estimated the total over the past five years as $1,700,000,000, or £750,000,000, equivalent to £150,000,000 a year for a country with a population of 9,000,000, and an area one-seventy-seventh of its Congo colony.

Uranium and the Atom Bomb

In the modern period uranium and copper have displaced the old rubber and ivory (alongside diamonds, palm kernels, coffee, cotton

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and continuing rubber and ivory) as the main source of profit. The American atom bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and after, and the first hydrogen bombs, were based on Congo uranium. The uranium mines of the Belgian Congo were operated by the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga,* the controlling interest in whose shares used to be held by the British monopoly, Tanganyika Concessions. In April 1950, the British Government sold 1,677,961 of the ordinary shares of Tanganyika Concessions (or nearly half the total of 3,831,412 ordinary shares issued up to that date), which it owned at the time, to an Anglo-Belgian group, which in turn sold 600,000 of these shares to an American group associated with the Rockefeller monopoly interests. According to the posthumously published memoirs of Senator Vandenberg, one of the conditions of aid to Britain in connection with the Marshall Plan was that the United States should obtain a share in Congo uranium. Thus the brassy neon-lit prosperity of the show facade of post-war Brussels has been built on the foundation of the atom bomb and the exploitation of the Congo workers, who in the uranium mines, for mining the highest priced raw ore in the world—selling for several thousand dollars a ton—were paid wages of less than three shillings a day. The veil of secrecy over uranium has covered the subsequent financial transactions or the still unsettled question of the future disposition of the shares after the formation of the Congo Government. But it will assuredly be healthier for the world when the Congo people become masters of their own resources.

A National Revolution

No wonder the Congo people have arisen in one of the greatest popular national revolutions of our era. No wonder the smug Belgian, British, French and American monopolists are so tenacious to use every device and stratagem and brutality to hold their rich booty even after they have been compelled to recognise the juridical right of independence. Congo is the heart of Africa. As Congo goes, so will go Rhodesia, Angola, South Africa. Here is being enacted at this moment the battle of all Africa's future. The self-satisfied experts of imperialism, blind as always everywhere to what really moves among the people until revolution strikes them in the face, prattled until the last minute of the passive torpor of the Congo people, where the skilful Belgian colonialists allowed no nonsense of political institutions or education or new ideas or rights, and where the people were supposed to be sunk in passive acceptance, immune from the currents stirring all Africa. That typical

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American tourist's *vade mecum* to the Continents, Gunther's *Inside Africa,* could still declare as late as 1955:

> The great bulk of Congolese do not think at all in nationalist terms, i.e. of freedom from Belgian rule, because they are not educated enough to know what nationalism is. The Belgian system works well, and organised discontent does not exist. . . The Congo is almost completely tranquil politically. . . Practically no danger exists of any African uprising. . . The Belgian government is a very sound government indeed.

Even this shallow American author had nevertheless to record the fact that official statistics recognised 3,800 political prisoners (and official statistics in these matters usually understate the true extent). The seeds of the future harvest were already sown.

People Arisen

There is no corner of the world, however remote, however held in chains and blinkers, that can be cut off from the world advance of liberation, whatever the differences in tempo of development. Gunther's wisdom on Congo tranquillity was published in 1955. That was the year of Bandung, landmark of the great Afro-Asian sweep forward. Already in that year, in 1955 all the groups in Congo (no parties were allowed) united in a common manifesto demanding independence, even though the goal then seemed distant and was set to be won in thirty years. With the development of the organised Congo National Movement around the leadership of its President, Patrice Lumumba, the tempo quickened. At the Accra All-Africa Peoples' Conference in December 1958, Lumumba was head of the Congo delegation and was elected to the Executive Committee of the All-Africa Secretariat. The Accra Conference pledged support of all African peoples for Congo freedom.

Bloodbath of Freedom

It was at the immediately following demonstrations in Leopoldville in January 1959, gathered in defiance of bans to hear and acclaim the report of the Accra Conference, that the bloodbath followed, with Belgian armoured cars firing on the people and 49 Africans killed (according to official admissions; actual figures were far higher). This bloodbath was the dawn of Congo freedom. There followed the renewed shootings of October 1959, with 20 Africans shot dead, and the arrest and imprisonment of Lumumba in November. In vain the scribblers of imperialism try to pretend that Belgium made a 'too hasty' 'gift' of freedom to Congo, like Attlee's 'gift' of freedom to India (not to mention George III's

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'gift' of freedom to the United States). In the words of Lumumba at the ceremony inaugurating independence on June 30:

> We have endured contempt, insults and blows endured morning and night. We knew law was never the same for the whites and the blacks. The fate of the political prisoners was worse than death. Who can forget the hangings and shootings in which perished so many of our brethren? Who can forget the gaols into which were flung those who had escaped the bullets of the soldiers?

Such was the fitting epitaph on Belgian Congo.

Vultures Gather

Imperialism will not lightly surrender its rich prey. As soon as the hold of Belgium was seen to weaken, all the vultures of imperialism are hovering to bury their claws in the flesh of the hoped for victim before the young bird has gathered strength. In the hour of collapse of the old colonial system and frontiers the imperialists dream of a new partition of Africa. Already the Belgian monopolists had been confident that their evacuation would be a masquerade, and that by their intrigues and manoeuvres to buy up leaders and organisations they could disintegrate the national front into hopeless confusion, and then, in the name of suppressing disorder, march in again to resume armed occupation, utilising the 25,000 professional soldiers of their Force Publique under Belgian officers. 'Nothing has changed', as the magnates of *Haut Katanga* in their Brussels headquarters placidly informed *The Observer* correspondent as late as July 6, one week after the proclamation of independence. But on that day the soldiers of the Force Publique rose against their Belgian officers and united with the national cause. From that moment everything changed. The masquerade gave place to battle. Once again was demonstrated the profound truth of the merciless Marxist definition of the essence of the state as the body of armed men. The Belgian monopolists had now to rush in by airlift their own armed forces, parachutists and battalions, eleven thousand in all, to create a reign of terror. This invasion bore the character of open Belgian armed aggression, since it took place just after the sovereign independence of Congo had been solemnly recognised by the United Nations on July 7, in accordance with the old plan. Hence the Congo Government was able to appeal to the United Nations for protection of its independence against the Belgian armed aggression. With all the Afro-Asian states promptly responding, alongside the socialist states ranged with them against imperialism, the United Nations Security Council had no alternative but to vote a resolution authorising

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measures to support the legal Congo Government and ensure the withdrawal of the invaders. The sequel has been a study in the tactics of imperialism (or, for those who prefer it, 'post-imperialism').

New Colonialism

Already before the liberation of Congo the rival imperialists were staking their claims. From the side of the British imperialists Central African Federation troops were massed on the Congo border months in advance in hungry anticipation, and on March 2 Premier Welensky startled the world with an interview in the *Daily Express* stating that negotiations had begun for the incorporation of Katanga in the Federation; while later trial balloons were floated suggesting the amalgamation of Katanga with Tanganyika. The French imperialists through the Foreign Minister, Couve de Murville, reminded the Belgian Government on February 26 that France still maintained its rights under the 1908 Franco-Belgian Agreement by which France was given the first option to purchase Belgian Congo in the event of its relinquishment by Belgium. Belgium meanwhile was seeking to ensure its continued grip on the wealth of Katanga through its puppet Tshombe. But the tactics of U.S. imperialism were the most subtle, just as over Suez in relation to Britain, seeking to give lip service to the United Nations call for Congo independence and Belgian withdrawal in order to weaken the Belgian position, and secure their gradual withdrawal, and utilise the United Nations for U.S. penetration and domination. Thus the U.N. units under Western imperialist command were used only to disarm Congolese troops, while maintaining the friendliest relations with the Belgian armed forces and puppets, repeatedly snubbing and cold-shouldering the Congo Government, and preparing the way for proposals for a U.N. mandate over Congo.

'Collective Imperialism'?

By August 12 the plan to re-establish imperialist control in Congo through a form of U.N. mandate came into the open:

> Mr. Hammerskjöld's report said that a consultative group of international experts would go to work early next week to draw up programmes in 11 different areas of Government responsibility. These were: agriculture, communications, education, finance, foreign trade, health, national security, labour, the magistrature, natural resources and industry, and public administration.
>
> (*The Guardian*, August 13, 1960.)

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A sufficiently comprehensive list. The well-informed *Toronto Globe and Mail* on August 1 had already spelled out the aim:

> Mince words as it may, maintain the fiction of Congolese sovereignty as it may, the United Nations has taken over a country. . . Dag Hammerskjöld, Secretary General of the U.N., is proposing a five year occupation.

And of course that organ of philanthropic imperialism, the *New Statesman,* on August 6, leaped with joy over the plan:

> New horizons can be glimpsed for the United Nations. It will for the first time assume direct responsibility in the colonial and ex-colonial world. Such a scheme would be much more acceptable to colonial peoples than the best-intentioned imperial efforts. The Congo, even though independent, would become a U.N. ward.

One thing these gentlemen forget. That is the wishes of the Congo people, who did not fight for their independence in order to hand it back to imperialism in a new suit.

Africa and Imperialism

A clergyman back from Congo at the beginning of August, Dr. George Carpenter, a Secretary of the International Missionary Council, reporting to the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, remarked that all the reports published from Congo failed to give the viewpoint of the Congo people:

> The news reports in the press of the western world have concentrated on the spectacular and violent aspects of the scene. They tell the story from the white man's viewpoint; for the most part they show little awareness that there is another side. . . Is fellow feeling with peoples struggling to establish their freedom to be more keenly felt and more vigorously expressed among communists than among the free peoples of the west? (*The Times,* August 6, 1960.)

He has touched his finger on the vulnerable nerve. During these weeks reporters have swarmed over Congo and filled the columns of the press. Yet not one, so far as the Western press is concerned, has attempted to give a picture of what the ordinary people of Congo are thinking. Not one appears to have attempted to interview the ordinary man and woman of the Congo people. Not one has attempted to interview a members of the Force Publique—these men trained by the alien rulers to hold down their own people, yet in the moment of crisis responding to the most elementary national feeling, turning out their hated Belgian officers and fighting to protect their own Congo Government. How many of them have been shot down in Katanga and elsewhere by the Belgian rocket planes and guns? A veil of silence has been drawn. But it is the people

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of Congo who will say the last word. United with them stand all the peoples of Africa, with their eleven now independent African states due to meet in an 'African Summit' at Leopoldville at the end of August. United with them stand all the peoples of the new world of national liberation and the mighty socialist world—the new majority of the world. The last word is no longer with imperialism.

Cuba and Laos

Turn to Cuba on the other side of the world from Congo. Here is revealed a new height of the democratic national revolution. In face of all the threats and provocation from the U.S. imperialist giant across the water, the armed plane assaults and economic blackmail, the Cuban people have courageously gone forward to wipe out the old oppression and dependence and wrest key resources from the foreign monopolies into the hands of the people. Visibly the dollar tycoons itch to lash out in the old way, when the dispatch of a couple of gunboats and a curt order to the Marines was sufficient to deal with any recalcitrant Latin American state and restore a docile dictator. Their press spits venom. Every speech of Eisenhower thunders threats and imprecations. And yet they hesitate. They have hesitated so far to repeat the armed aggression with which they overthrew Arbenz in Guatemala. Why? Because they have discovered that the Latin American peoples are standing by Cuba. Because the Soviet Union has warned them that any attempt at armed aggression will be followed by quick retribution. Comically they appeal to the Monroe Doctrine, which would bind them to withdraw their bases from Europe. The one-time dictators of all America, the aggressors of Korea and Formosa, the lords of a hundred bases over the world, writhe in impotent fury. But they have not yet dared to act. Cuba is small. But Cuba is not alone. In the next continent even little Laos has valiantly set on the path to clear out the American military invaders and defy the thunderbolts of SEATO. There is danger still, danger of violent action from imperialism on every side. But the balance is moving, is moving every day, on the side of the peoples and of peace. Let us hasten to do our part to speed the movement of that balance while there is time. R.P.D.

August 16, 1960.

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COAL: WHAT FUTURE?

Arthur Horner

THE article 'Crisis in Coal', written so concisely and I think correctly by Will Paynter in the August issue, leaves little to add to the facts about the present situation. But to judge from the prospect before us, a brief retrospect may be of some value.

Briefly, the position is that there is a decline in coal consumption aggravated by Government policy, which is quite deliberately to let coal, indigenous or not, find its level, in competition with oil or other sources of heat and energy, from wherever they may be obtained. There was an occasion when we had to meet Lord Mills, then Minister of Power, when he made no bones about the position. We raised all the questions as to the importance of coal in the event of oil supplies being cut off; the difficulties of sinking new mines if existing ones were allowed to die, and so on. But he quite frankly explained that if the coal industry, burdened though it is by heavy interest charges, losses on foreign imports of coal, Government control of prices, and stocking, could not survive—well, it was just too bad for coal.

I have never been one of those who believed in the eternity of coal, as the sole source of heat and energy, nor do I think that it would be good if it was so. Coal like everything else is subject to change in outside factors, as well as within itself as an industry. The deliberate policy of encouraging and speeding up the inevitable process for purposes of taxation returns on oil and of subservience to the oil monopolies, of which the British Government is an important part, is a different matter. This attitude takes no account of social consequences—or does it? Because the effect of greatly increased imports of oil has been, and must be, to reduce the ability of the miners' union to secure working and living conditions which correspond to the ever-increasing productive output per man shift.

I have no doubt whatever that this Government would follow the logic of their competitive conception by importing coal from abroad to be sold against the home-produced products, if this could be secured at lower prices. The fact, however, is that British coal is still procurable more cheaply than European and U.S.A. coal when the ultimate price to the customer is taken into account. The fact that the industry is nationalised means nothing to those who think like Lord Mills, either in terms of loyalty or anything else. They completely ignore, or even make capital out of the

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difficulties, most of which the National Coal Board inherited from private owners: the need, as the Reid Committee stated in 1945, to reorganise completely the industry at vast cost; unjustifiable charges on foreign imports; shockingly high interest charges, and so on. The miners' union knows that it is futile to look for sympathy or help from this Government, on grounds of social consequences, such as the ruin of towns and villages and unemployment. They know that any solution must be found within their own ranks and those of their Labour and trade union allies.

The manoeuvre of putting £173,000,000 worth of coal in stock, to stave off the need to spread destitution which is the motive of Jim Bowman and his colleagues (and which was and is deplored by the Government) will no longer be pursued by the new regime, if Messrs. Robens and Brown pursue their policy of so-called decentralisation. This is a policy which I have always known Mr. Brown, the new deputy chairman, to favour; and I now learn it is one that Mr. Robens has always secretly supported, although in my contacts with him he has always successfully hidden these views and paid lip-service to nationalisation, with central control over all essentials. Well! circumstances alter cases, and I recognise that to have announced these views might have jeopardised his representation as Member of Parliament in a mining constituency. I understand his dilemma, but he should cease to talk of his great sacrifice in becoming Chairman of the National Coal Board at £10,000 a year plus £1,000 tax free expenses, when he states he could have done much better had he accepted offers to employ him in privately owned capitalist industry. I write this sharply, not because I have disliked Alf Robens personally, on the contrary; but lest his ignorance of a most complicated industry should make him a subservient tool to implement reactionary Tory Government policy. If this turns out to be the case, great harm and suffering can come to my people, the miners and their families.

What can happen if this policy of decentralisation is carried to its logical end? Great coalfields can be almost completely eliminated, others partially destroyed. For example, take East Midlands and Scotland, the one making a nett profit of approximately £18,000,000 per year, the other showing a loss of over £1,000,000 per month, or some £12,000,000 yearly. According to the rules of capitalist society, Scotland should have been closed down and the Midland coal transported to Scotland, instead of large quantities being stocked at considerable expense there. Is this position of profit and loss the result of some virtue on the one part and delinquency

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on the other? Of course not. When as part of the so-called 'Big Six', I travelled the country, to investigate the causes of deficiency in production, we took evidence from men and managements. We found cases in Scotland where men were producing at the coalface as much as 18 tons per shift, filling with a shovel in less than a height of two feet. No one could exceed this in the circumstances, and Sir Hubert Holdsworth, Bill Sales and I could not do anything about the losses at the colliery, except to congratulate the men and hope for rapid reorganisation.

Fortunately there is no likelihood of Notts or Derby, the high producing profitable districts, being drawn into conflict with the non-profitable, or less profitable, areas or pits within areas. The bitter experiences of the Spencer period have been learned. 'Never again', was the substance of the speeches I heard at the Llandudno Conference last month from the Chairman of the Notts Area, and the Secretary of the Derbyshire Area. I have just written a book, which has much to say of the 1920s, when the ascertainment system was devised, with terrible consequences for the mining community. Frank Hodges, the then Secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, sponsored it. Its outcome was to reduce the industry's man-power from 1,227,000 in 1920 to 766,000 in 1939, so that over 450,000 men were driven from the industry, thousands from their homes and families. Those who were left were forced below subsistence levels: awards had to be brought in to make up the minimum sustenance on which men could still work.

That was the then form of 'decentralisation', each district depending upon its own resources. That's what it means, Messrs. Robens and Brown, however politely you put your case for it. No one, whether in the Coal Board or the Union, objects to District application of principles agreed nationally. There is plenty of room for local initiative now in both spheres. But there are matters which are inviolable and cannot be ignored unless you first arrange for the funerals of your miners, who will no longer be there to get your coal. This is a matter of life or death.

There is a contraction of the men employed in the industry from 669,800 in July last year to 613,500 in July this year, a reduction of 56,300 men. This would have calamitous effects without nationalisation. Fortunately the worst possible results have been avoided through centralisation, which made possible control of recruitment, redundancy schemes, retirement at 65 years with a lump sum payment, and so on. That the number of men employed will fall still further is certain. Not only has oil come to stay, but in the

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coming years nuclear energy for peaceful purposes will do to oil, what oil is now doing to coal. The process of development can be speeded up or slowed down, it cannot be halted. Even more important is the increased quantities of coal got by machines, power-loaders, etc. The output at the face, now 4·093 tons per shift, will soon be at 5 tons, whilst output per all employed, now at 1·408 tons, will pass the thirty hundredweight mark. Where will it stop? I went down many mines in Australia; one on the south coast of New South Wales had an output from one face seven feet six inches thick of 2,300 tons per shift from 60 operational men; that is, from face to washery, over 38 tons per man per shift. I see that in the U.S.S.R. there are advanced experiments which, it is said, may result in it not being necessary for men to go into the pits at all, except to install machinery which can be operated by remote control from the surface.

I have never belonged to the school of thought which accepted it as inevitable that men will always have to work in pits. (I call them slaughter-houses without humane killers.) There are many safer, better jobs: I know of none more dangerous, or onerous. Of the more than 450,000 miners who were driven out in the depression, I met hundreds in my visits to Birmingham, Slough, Coventry and elsewhere, and none regretted the break, once it was made. They had a safe roof over their heads, and did not undergo the subconscious fear of pneumoconiosis, or other pit diseases, which are at the back of the mind of most miners.

It is only possible to plan completely for such a vast contingency under Socialism, which is in control of alternative employment. We, however, live under capitalism, which has neither the desire nor the means to organise a great transition. We, however, have a nationalised coal industry, with centralised power over all its parts and more important still, there exists a national united mine-workers' union capable of compelling the implementation of the Nationalisation Act by the National Coal Board. There is a group of miners' M.P.s, whose first loyalty is to the miners. There are many ways to meet the situation: improved wages; re-introduction of the 7-Hour Day, leading to 6 hours, as the Sankey Commission recommended 40 years ago; better pensions at 60, leading to pensions at 55 years of age. (It is 60 years, with a pension of approximately £10 per week in Australia.) Oh, there are so many reforms which are progressively feasible and practicable, and more will become apparent. I am sure that the National Union of Mine-workers will find and apply them as need and opportunity arises.

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A BELGIAN VIEW OF CONGO

Pierre Joye

[*An anti-imperialist voice from Belgium comes as a refreshing breeze of sanity after the hurricanes of propaganda from Belgian news monopolies (sedulously picked up and repeated by the B.B.C. and others). We are pleased therefore to print this article written especially for us by the Editor of* Le Drapeau Rouge *(Red Flag), organ of the Belgian Communist Party which is active in the struggle for complete withdrawal of troops and a new treaty of friendship to be negotiated with the Congo Republic.—Ed.*, L.M.]

ON JUNE 30, 1960, the Republic of Congo was solemnly proclaimed at Leopoldville in the presence on the one hand of the new President, M. Kasavubu, and on the other of the Belgian Head of State, King Baudouin. At that point, it might have appeared that the Congolese people had become master of their fate in circumstances almost unprecedented in the history of colonialism: without having had to face a very long struggle to vindicate their rights; and even with the full agreement, support and co-operation of the former masters of the country.

This peaceful achievement of independence was the more astonishing because only two years earlier the creation of an independent State would have seemed to the Congolese people themselves only a remote prospect. Their spokesmen had long been extremely moderate: when in 1956 they asserted the need to prepare for independence they were only proposing to achieve it by stages within thirty years! Indeed, Congo was then still a very 'silent empire'. The Belgian colonialists had been governing it for seventy-five years as though firmly entrenched to all eternity. They occupied every leading post and exercised absolute power: the signature of an European official was enough to deport Africans on mere suspicion of disturbing the established order, with no right of appeal, and sometimes for life.

However, in January, 1959, following violent demonstrations in Leopoldville which cost three hundred African lives, the Belgian authorities entirely modified their attitude. The most representative leaders of Belgium—King Baudouin and Prime Minister Eyskens—suddenly adopted the very principle which they had flatly rejected only some weeks earlier: the independence of Congo.

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Why did Belgian capitalists so readily resign themselves to abandoning one of the richest colonies in Africa?

It would seem that their most influential representatives had recognised the bankruptcy of the old-style colonialism today; they had realised that it is becoming more and more difficult to resist by brute force the liberation movement of the colonial peoples. The break-up of the colonial empires of Britain, France and Holland gave them food for thought. As one of their leading official spokesmen, Theo Lefèvre, President of the Christian-Social Party (Catholic), said recently: 'How could a little country like Belgium succeed where great Powers like France and Great Britain have failed?'

In granting independence to the Congo the Belgian bourgeoisie had nevertheless no intention of renouncing the enormous benefits they derived from their colony. The leaders of the great capitalist trusts reckoned that a 'realistic' policy would enable them to keep all their privileges in a nominally independent Congo which would nevertheless remain completely under their economic control, their political influence, and their actual domination. The Congolese people, they claimed, could not do without Belgian 'guardianship'. They had neither experienced administrators, technicians, nor capital.

And the truth is that in seventy-five years of colonial rule, Belgium had done nothing to enable the Congolese people to run their own affairs. Congo has hundreds of priests, and even four African bishops, but in the administration, from top to bottom, there are 4,600 Belgian officials and only three Congolese officials. In the whole of Congo there was not one African Army officer, nor engineer, not a single lawyer, agricultural scientist, nor doctor.

Belgian capitalist circles had imagined that it would be easy to erect a political facade for their use in independent Congo, where key posts could be entrusted to amenable Congolese always willing to obey Belgian 'advisers'. The colonial authorities had done all they could to mould the Congolese into 'good Negroes'. For many years they had forbidden all political activity in Congo, throwing the Kasavubus and the Lumumbas into jail, and by every means building up non-nationalist 'political parties' led by subservient men, like Tshombe's Conakat in Katanga, and the *Parti National du Progres* (National Progressive Party) or P.N.P., which the Congolese were quick to dub the *'Parti des Nègres payés'* ('Party of Negro Paid Men').

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Whilst accepting the principle of Congolese independence, the Belgian authorities moreover took care not to fix a date for it. Serious difficulties then rapidly arose when the Congolese leaders insisted on specifying a definite date. On that occasion they had the advantage of unanimous and effective support of the whole Belgian working class; and the Belgian government, after resisting for a year, was obliged to accept June 30, 1960, as the date.

In Congo itself despite all the manoeuvres of the colonial administration, the General Election, the first in the history of the Congo, was held in May last to establish a Parliament and then a government. It resulted in a complete triumph for the national parties, except in Katanga, where the Belgian mining interests are too strong. The winners in the elections were the Congolese National Movement (M.N.C.) led by Patrice Lumumba; the losers were the P.N.P. created almost from top to bottom by the Belgian administration.

On June 30, therefore, it was two former Congolese political prisoners, two 'extremists', who were to meet King Baudouin at Leopoldville: Kasavubu, the President of the Republic, and Lumumba, the Premier. It was a severe setback to those Belgian political leaders who had thought that by means of a little hypocrisy the old regime could in practice be maintained in a nominally independent Congo.

The most reactionary circles, the 'ultras', who had protested all along against the colonial policy of the Eyskens Government, which they regarded as too liberal and described as 'the policy of abandonment', were not slow to rub it in. When some days later Congolese army units refused to recognise the authority of Belgian officers remaining in command, the diehard reactionaries unleashed a violent campaign aimed at imposing military and political intervention in Congo. For them, it was essential to drive out Lumumba and reconquer Congo 'by tanks and jets'. Under their pressure, exploiting jingo sentiments evoked by tales of thousands of Belgians who had fled in panic from Congo, the Eyskens Government sent thousands of paratroops into Congo, whilst they supported secretly the separatist movement organised in Katanga at the instigation of the European colonialists and the *Union Minière*.

Events have shown that the Belgian capitalists have achieved no greater success by this attempt to revert to a 'policy of force'.

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HAVE WE THE LEADERSHIP WE DESERVE ?

'Vulcan'

THE ninety-second annual gathering of the trade unions takes place in Douglas, Isle of Man, when the Trades Union Congress meets during the first week of September. International affairs dominate the Congress agenda, though this does not mean that national and internal matters take a back seat. It is right and proper that the issue of nuclear weapons should take first place, because the use of such a barbaric weapon would affect every man, woman and child irrespective of race, religion or political affiliation. Important as it is, it will not overshadow important national matters such as nationalisation, Clause 4 of the Labour Party's constitution, the role of shop stewards, old age pensions and wages.

On all these questions, the striking thing in the last six months has been how strongly critical of reactionary policies the trade unions' members have shown themselves. Outstanding has been the overwhelming rejection of the Gaitskell proposal to emasculate Clause 4 (the socialist aim) by the trade union conferences; they will have none of it. At the same time the members of the union by their actions in factory and workshop, dock and ship, have shown their readiness to have a go. How will this splendid spirit find expression in this Congress and be made effective? This is what is looked for from this Trades Union Congress, and that is the responsibility that rests upon each delegate.

For make no mistakes; there are sharp battles ahead, on a new scale: and during this week in the Isle of Man, and afterwards, delegates must give some serious thought, not only to the burning issues confronting the working class here and now, but to the way in which the whole movement is being led, or misled.

Is it not a remarkable thing that in these past months a lead has not been coming from the General Council to the unions? On the contrary, it is the unions that have been giving a lead to the General Council. What the General Council have been busy about (harrying and nagging at the constituent unions) has been discussed in earlier articles.*

Therefore, whilst the main attention must of course be directed to the Congress agenda, delegates are bound to be thinking about

*'The Salt of the Earth', J. R. Scott, January: 'The General Council and the Shop Stewards', Vulcan, February: 'Men of Metal on the Move', Vulcan, June.

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the increasingly serious question of leadership. The Trades Union Congress has existed for over ninety years. After its first twenty-five years, its mainly Liberal leaders made new rules which Keir Hardie stated were 'framed for the express purpose of excluding Broadhurst, Tom Mann and myself'. Another twenty-five years passed: and Congress decided to set up the General Council, all its headquarters and all its men—the lot. That was forty years ago this month. Maybe it is now time for the unions in Congress to take a look at their General Council, weigh it up, see whether something better cannot be made of it.

First of all, everyone has to admit that the General Council has not turned out to be 'the General Staff of the Army of Labour' as was hoped for just forty years ago. It is a very mixed bunch, both in outlook and abilities. In outlook, it varies from those on the extreme right, with views and behaviour that makes them the darlings of the capitalist press, through a large middle group with a very moderate standpoint indeed—or sometimes no standpoint at all outside the problems of their own union, to a small number with a keen socialist outlook, of the type of Ted Hill, Frank Cousins and Robert Willis. In abilities, it is even more mixed: and it is really astonishing how large a proportion of them have—shall we say?—hidden their light under a bushel, so that they are unknown people to the vast majority of trade unionists.

If anyone doubts this estimation, we suggest that the next time they address a trade union branch meeting, they break off during the speech and ask anyone in the audience to name the members of this General Council. They will be lucky to get half a dozen named. As for the rest, justifiably you could ask: 'How then do they ever get on to the General Council?' The answer is, by large-scale voting: you vote for me and we'll vote for you. Forty years ago Bob Smillie demanded, and got, a 'committee of inquiry into the bartering of votes'. It was proved to the hilt. Any penalties inflicted? Not on your life; and they thought with the big brand-new General Council the scandal would cease. That was a mistaken belief: and to the bartering of votes in the years since Smillie died there was added a scarcely disguised witch-hunt. It is about time this whole matter was taken up again.*

*'The Musicians' Union and the British Actors' Equity Association propose that general councillors should be elected only by the unions in the group they represent, and not by the Congress as a whole. Such a revision of procedure would certainly cause some heads in the present General Council to roll, and will be rejected for that reason; but it would also remove much of the obsequiousness which leaders of small unions now show to their bigger brethren in order to be sure of their votes'.

(*Daily Telegraph*, August 1, 1960.)

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This year's Congress has another important feature: a new General Secretary will be appointed. For Sir Vincent Tewson retires (on grounds of ill-health) and George Woodcock steps into his shoes. For there is to be no contest. Yet there are several million trade unionists to choose from, every one of those eligible for the post. But one thing is certain: the General Council do not want, and they are certainly not going to have, another Walter Citrine. Everyone knows that when Citrine left the post of General Secretary to take up an appointment with a newly nationalised industry, in 1946, the majority of the General Council made up their mind that they did not want anybody with similar ability. For say what you will about him, Citrine had outstanding ability, and as a consequence, with Ernest Bevin, he dominated the General Council, he spoon-fed them all. He took the responsibilities and the decisions and they carried them out. Many were afraid of him, jealous of him and as a consequence, hated him. So when he resigned they rose in their mouse-like might and looked for the opposite—and found it in Vincent Tewson. And now? What is the background of the secretary elect, George Woodcock? Has he worked for years in factory, mine or mill? Served an apprenticeship in shipbuilding, mining or any other important industry? Has he been prominent as a shop steward, branch secretary, district president? In short, has he 'served his time' in the class struggles of the workers? No, this is one of the new-type administrators.

It all comes back to one thing: the question of leadership and democracy; how leadership should be elected and how it should function in the democratic organisations of the working class. For the whole General Council set up is only the reflexion of a much deeper problem. There needs to be an examination of the constituent bodies that make up the TUC. The position of the British trade unions themselves, both in their basis in the workshop and in the rarified atmosphere up top, has to be gone into very carefully, before the question of leadership can be solved. But it must be done soon. Else we shall sail into the sixties without a chart or means of navigation, for it is not only the seamen, now on strike, that may find themselves up against the owners, the law courts and their own 'leadership'.

We must work for a state of things in which, throughout the trade union movement, platform and delegates will be collectively hammering out a policy completely in tune with the rank and file, marking out the next steps to mobilise the workers for action against the Tory Government and the ruling class, for peace and

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socialism. If not this year maybe, yet tomorrow this must happen; and then the TUC will emerge as the great Parliament of the organised workers with mutual confidence between the leaders and the rank and file. It can then be said that the forward march is really beginning, forward in fulfilling the historic mission of the working class; the destruction of capitalism and creation of socialism. This is the true objective of left-thinking people, Communists and others. But it needs organising.

WILLIAM MORRIS ON SOLIDARITY

[*On March 15, 1890, the miners of Britain came out on strike, in a trial of strength before bigger battles to come. William Morris was quick to comment: and he wrote the following in* The Commonweal *the next week.*]

The great coal strike is ominous of coming changes, and cannot be looked on as even a great strike might have been a few years ago. The demands of the miners are so moderate, and so uncomplicated with any difficulties as to method of employment and the like, and moreover, the business facts on which the strike is based are so clear and so much in favour of the men, that it was expected in many quarters that the masters would give in at once, and in ordinary times they would have done so. The fact that they are preparing for an obstinate resistance shows that they are not so much thinking of the present strike as of their general position in face of the awakening of Labour. The red spectre of Revolution looms threateningly in the distance before them, and instinctively they are prepared to fight.

Let us look at it from the same point of view, and understand that it is a battle, not a mere business dispute. If the miners act well together, and if they are supported by the sympathy of their brother workers, even those who will suffer by the strike, they will now for the first time understand their power, and a weapon for the hand of revolution will be fashioned, which will be irresistible; which can only be resisted by the brute-force in the hands of the upper classes—*i.e.*, the army and police. This instrument, the striking-power of the coal miners backed by the assent of their fellow workers, being once ready, there will be nothing between us and revolution but a knowledge on the part of the workers *of what to claim,* which can be nothing short of an *abolition of the monopoly of the resources of nature,* i.e., *the land and all that is on it, which is used for the reproduction of wealth.*

This, and not a pitiful rise in wages, is what in the long run lies before the strike of the coal miners: let us hope that the events of this strike will show them how necessary it is for them to make this claim, how feasible to get what they demand.

(*The Commonweal,* March 22, 1890. William Morris.)

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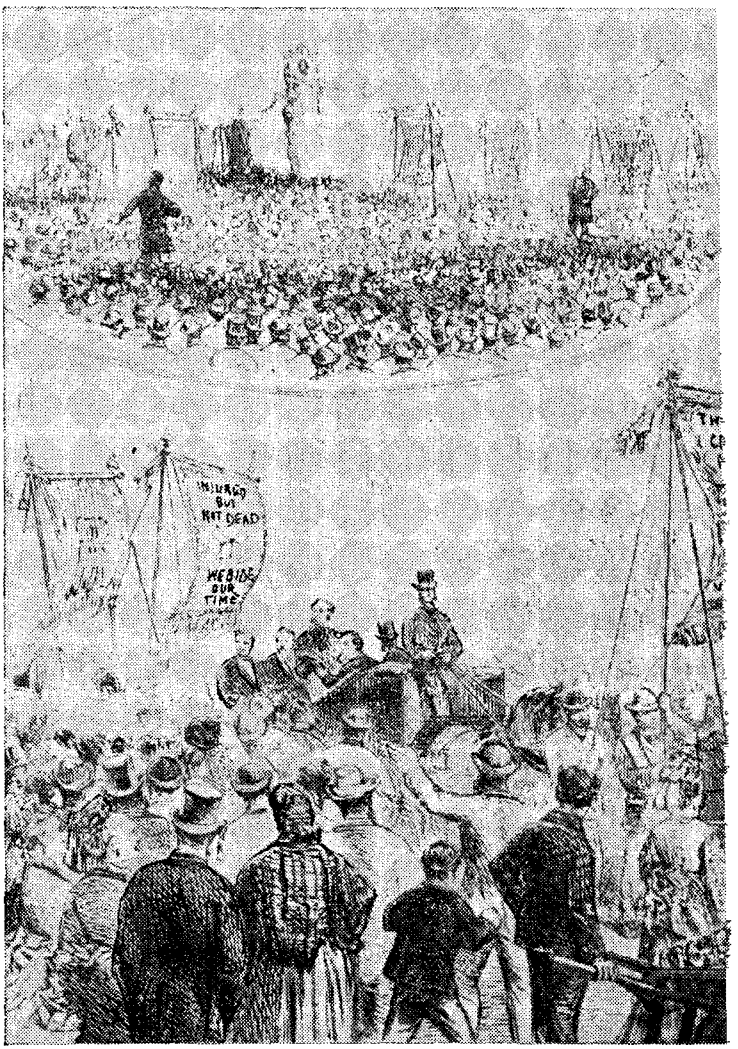
The Case of the Cabinetm



The London trade unions demonstrate to greet five members peaceful picketing, on their release. The support of public o fication of anti-trade union laws, and established the right of in Hyde Park. *Inset, right:* Reception outside Coldbaths Field

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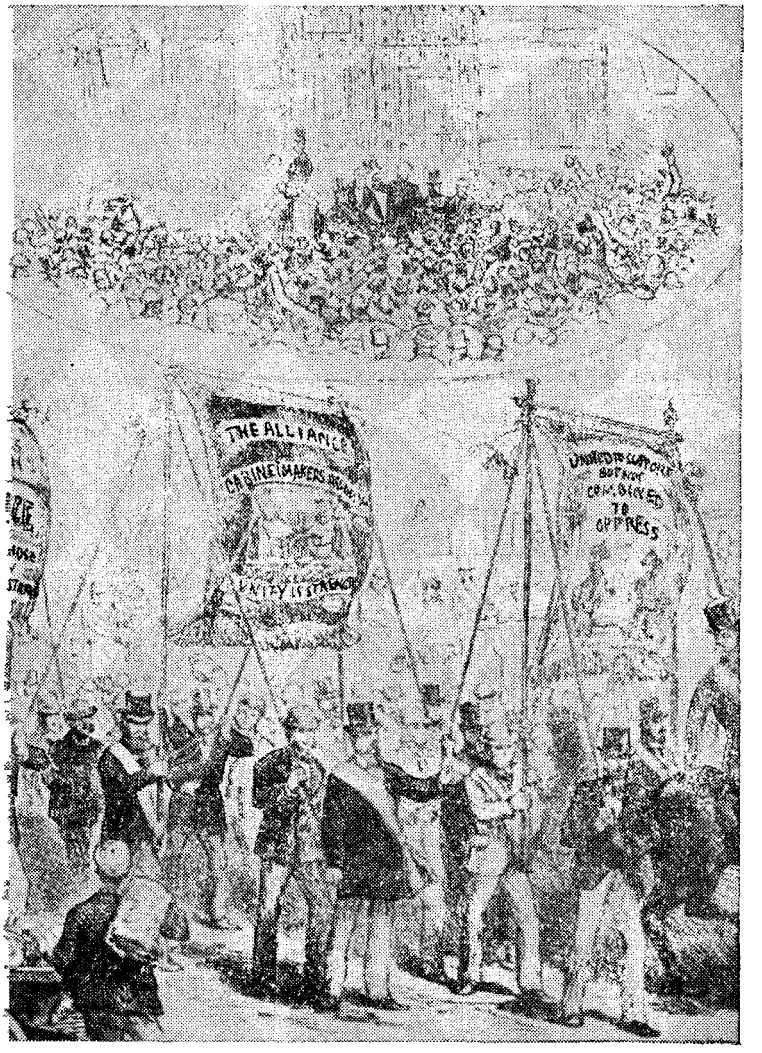
rs, 1875.



Alliance Cabinet Makers' Association, imprisoned for perfectly coming at the end of a long trade union campaign, forced modi- ul picketing. *Inset, left:* Messrs. Broadhurst and Odger speaking

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MISMANAGING THE ECONOMY

Leonard Thomas

RECENT economic events in Britain have a depressingly familiar air. Since the beginning of the year we have had two increases in Bank Rate and consequent increases in other interest rates, a new credit squeeze, the re-introduction of controls on hire purchase, and a stand-still decreed for public capital investment in 1961-62. In his recent speech, Mr. Macmillan had indeed some new phrases—'exportfreudigkeit', 'a great band of merchant adventurers', etc., but the message was hardly original—'Britain must export more'. In short, for the umpteenth time since the War, the balance of payments is once more in trouble. In 1958 and 1959 things had seemed better, on the surface, thanks mainly to the slump in raw materials' prices and therefore in British import prices, and to a rapid increase in exports, particularly of cars, to the U.S.A. But since the beginning of 1960, exports have begun to fall, while imports have continued to increase, if more slowly.

The increases in Bank Rate and the credit squeeze have served to mask, so far, the effects of this deterioration in the trade balance. Higher interest rates in London have drawn in funds from abroad, notably from New York, and foreign buyers of British goods have found it cheaper to pay early, rather than obtain credit in London. But these short-term funds, the 'hot money' of the City Editors' columns, can flow out as fast as they came in. It would be foolhardy to count simply on a continued inflow of such funds to keep the pound sterling out of trouble, while the real trade balance worsens.

The other and more far-reaching purpose of the Government's restrictive monetary policy is to hold down the level of wages and home consumer demand, to discourage imports and push exports. But this has caused much grumbling in business and Conservative Party circles. A sharp contradiction appears between immediate and long-term needs. The dilemma and the frustration are clearly expressed in the July issue of the *Economic Review*. This argues that deflationary measures have been justified this year, but it is also against deflation being pressed home:

> It is a most wasteful cure to a persistent balance of payments problem: the effects upon imports and exports are small; it is bound to disturb industrial confidence and to induce a decline in investment; and the check to growth is likely to make the real competitive position weaker and so to

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have a bad effect in the future. The British economy has suffered this too often in recent years. The measures taken this year already include steps to curtail investment.

This journal therefore starts to reopen the debate on the general structure of the balance of payments which boiled up in 1957 but subsided again in 1958-59. Its main point is that 'the balance of payments includes a burden of overseas investment and of overseas military expenditure greater than that of most of our competitors'. It remarks that a 'surprisingly large part' of total defence expenditure falls on the balance of payments.

Readers of *Labour Monthly* will find this neither new nor surprising! But it is useful to underline again some of the basic facts of Britain's present political economy. Some 5 per cent of our exports go to cover the cost of overseas military expenditure, and after allowing for this we need, according to the Treasury experts, a current account surplus of £450,000,000 a year to stabilise the balance of payments. (The current account consists of exports and imports, plus all other current receipts and payments). This large surplus is required to cover the *present* exports of capital and to build up the gold reserves to enable the £ sterling to play its present role as an international currency. In practice this £450,000,000 is a fantasy, a chimera. The nearest figure actually achieved was £349,000,000 in 1958, but the surplus dropped back to £145,000,000 in 1959 and may be even smaller in 1960. But the Treasury is nonetheless correct; with its present burdens the balance of payments will remain unstable without the £450,000,000 surplus. This fact is dragged back into the light again as soon as the trading account deteriorates.

The position is that the United Kingdom's share in total world exports of manufactured goods has fallen steadily year by year since 1950 and seems to be falling again in 1960. As to imports, a new feature of the situation is that recently it has been imports of manufactured goods rather than of raw materials which have increased most rapidly. Particularly since the 1957-58 recession, international trade in the non-socialist world sector has developed in a peculiar fashion. The main expansion has been in trade between the big capitalist countries. The trade of the primary producing countries has been relatively depressed; the volume of their exports has risen, but since their prices have remained at a low level, they have been forced in turn to keep their imports down.

The struggle between the capitalist countries for markets in the primary producing countries remains of course important, and

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here Britain has lost out heavily. The most serious loss in its share of world markets for manufactures has been its reduced share of the sterling area market, where the U.S.A., West Germany and Japan have all made gains. But the capitalist countries tend now to see each other's domestic markets as the most profitable. In this battle the aim is to sell the maximum to one's rivals, while competing vigorously to stop these rivals getting too big a share of one's own domestic market. The U.S.A., having seen its own export surplus drastically reduced, is now fighting back within its home market, e.g. the 'compact' car versus the British and other foreign cars; and has also launched a new export drive, profiting by the reduction of trade barriers to its goods in the U.K., the sterling area, and Western Europe. Western Europe has been split into two blocs, the Six and the Seven, each designed to intensify trade exchanges within its own area. The Six are also erecting a common tariff wall vis-à-vis the rest of the world. The Common Market of the Six is by far the more powerful, and its leading power, Western Germany, has built up an enormous export surplus with the rest of the world.

What then is the attitude of the great monopolies which dominate our economy, and of their Macmillan government? Firstly, they are trying to put the blame on the small firms for failing to make a proper contribution to exports while they, the virtuous monopolists, have been sweating blood doing their patriotic export duty! This is a particularly nauseating piece of hypocrisy. Apart from anything else, these are the very people who carved out the Empire as a fat protected market for themselves, styled their companies the 'Imperial' this and the other, finally concentrated half of our foreign trade in the Empire, and now find themselves being jostled out by apparently more vigorous competitors. For a time they staked heavily on the American market, and for a time this seemed to work. But U.K. imports from the U.S.A. have recently been rising fast, while exports of cars to that market fell abruptly by two-thirds from May to June. In relation to Western Europe their first gambit was a humiliating failure. In the sacred name of anti-Communism they encouraged the creation of a bloc in the image of Hitler's New Order, and then found themselves firmly locked out, their only compensation being the captaincy of a motley Second XI in the form of the European Free Trade Area. By all appearances they are now nerving themselves for a new gambler's throw, to take the U.K. into the Common Market on the best terms they can get. Imperial Tariff Preference, the Seven, and British agriculture would just have to be accommodated to this one way or another.

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The idea is that such a move would force the British economy to become more 'dynamic', in the capitalist sense. It would be forced into an accelerated process of rationalisation and concentration, with a further strengthening of the great monopoly concerns in order to fight their German partners and/or form closer links with them. Secondly, the wages and conditions of the British working people would come under stronger attack, on the plea of the need to be fully competitive in the struggle within the Common Market. It need hardly be said that the goal of economic expansion, as working people understand it, would still elude us.

More than ever, under conditions of the continued decay of the old structure of the British Imperial economy, it is evident that the solution of the problems of our trade and economic expansion will not be found by our present State-managed monopoly capitalism. The fight for Socialist nationalisation is connected directly with the 'external' aspect of Britain's economic problems.

LABOUR MONTHLY TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

WHAT AFRICA'S KENYATTA WROTE THEN

The people of Africa will oppose the destruction of Ethiopian independence with all their might. We have a united front of Negroes and we ask all members of other races sympathetic to us to join us against the organised forces of reaction. With 200,000 men massed on the Ethiopian frontiers, Fascist Italy is prepared to attack a country which is not only the last remaining relic of the greatness of an Africa that once was, but a country which, in view of the Monroe doctrines, promulgated by Japan and America for the East and West, is the only independent country to which Imperialism, with its need for fresh fields and new pastures for economic exploitation, is turning to in its great international crisis. To support Ethiopia is to fight Fascism.

(From *Hands off Abyssinia!*, by J. M. KENYATTA, Honorary Secretary of the International African Friends of Abyssinia.)

'This recently formed organisation (office: 62 New Oxford Street, W.C.1) has as its object "to assist by all means in their power, in the maintenance of the territorial integrity and the political independence of Abyssinia". An All-Negro organisation, it has on its committee or amongst its officers, representatives of the following countries: West Indies, British Guiana, U.S.A., West Africa, Gold Coast, Somaliland and East Africa'.

(*Labour Monthly*, September 1935.)

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FORTY SPLENDID YEARS

Bob Stewart

HISTORY will record that the birth of a Communist Party in Britain was the outstanding event of the 1920's. The fact that it was nearly three years after the Bolshevik victory of 1917 indicates the difficulties encountered and overcome before it saw the light of day. Small as the event appeared, it was nevertheless the political culmination of more than a hundred years of British working class struggle against the rule of the capitalist class. These years had inscribed indelible victories as well as many defeats on the banners of the oldest working class movement of Europe.

Along the years it built the modern Trade Union movement which despite weakness, sectionalism and betrayal is still a powerful weapon and a training ground for militant workers. It embraced Chartism which meant the intrusion into politics of revolutionary ideas and practices on a mass scale. It eventually cast off the manacles of the Liberal Party even if it is not yet free from their illusions. It gave birth to the Labour Party—out of the strange assortment of Fabians, Independent Labour Party, Social Democratic Federation which became the British Socialist Party, the latter becoming a leading component of the Communist Party, and was itself affiliated to the Labour Party. Due to historic circumstances which I have not space to detail, the Labour Party has rejected a scientific outlook. It rejected Marxism, abhorred revolution, and has spent half a century confusing and befuddling the working class with hopes that capitalism would change its spots or at least let the right wing leaders of Labour paint them a different hue.

Necessarily capitalism imputed foreign parentage to the C.P. as it had done to Chartism and to early Socialist or other progressive movements. The mud refused to stick. The C.P. was bone and flesh of the British working class. Of course it had and is proud of its international connections. That also is a fine tradition of our class. The more immediate circumstances attending the birth of the C.P. may be thus described. Prior to 1914-18 and during the First World War there were outside of the official Labour Party many of the most class-conscious and militant workers who were split up amongst a number of more or less Marxist sects, *e.g.*, the Socialist Labour Party, Workers' Socialist Federation, South Wales Socialist Society, and many lesser bodies in various localities. These

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were largely concerned about the purity of their gospel. There were also the shop stewards, the workers' committees and many unattached rebels, *New Age* readers, Guildsmen, etc. Amongst them were great agitators and strike leaders who had with Tom Mann and others headed the struggles of workers on Merseyside, Clyde and elsewhere before World War I.

August, 1914, saw official Labour, like official Social Democracy, dip their flags of red and appear in the flamboyant colours of the capitalists they were supposed to fight against. A sorry spectacle indeed, relieved if but a little by the few who kept the flag aloft. The course of the war brought hellish experiences to the workers. Along came Military Service Acts, which gave rise to an Anti-Conscription movement, Munitions Acts, Rent Acts, high prices. Out of these struggles the clamant need for unity, discipline and wider understanding was arising—here, as in every country.

Then came 1917, and the glorious victory of the Russian workers and peasants. The movement in Britain was reborn out of the fires of war. On July 31 and August 1, 1920, after months of negotiation, a convention was brought together in London by the Joint Provisional Committee of the Communist Unity Conference, representing chiefly British Socialist Party, Communist Unity Group, South Wales Communist Council. (The unification was completed in the early months of 1921. The Leeds Congress in January, 1921, brought in the Scottish Communist Labour Party, whose leading members included William Gallacher and J. R. Campbell; while the left wing of the Independent Labour Party, including Shapurji Saklatvala, came in a month or two afterwards.)

At this founding convention in August, 1920, well-known figures included Bob Williams of the Transport Workers Federation, A. A. Purcell, Colonel Malone, William Mellor, Joe Vaughan, Arthur McManus, Tom Bell, William Paul and Albert Inkpin. Of the Provisional Executive elected I fear I am now alone. Some have done their day and passed on. Others sought other fields and have faded from my memory. The convention was serious and full of zeal, sharply divided on the question of affiliation to the Labour Party, but when Paul and Hodgson had finished debate and affiliation was carried the Conference agreed in unanimity. I recollect that after the convention finished on the Sunday, a group comprising Bill Hewlett of Wales, Bill Jackson of Sheffield, Frank Simpson of Perth, George Anderson of Coatbridge, Fred Douglas and myself from Dundee were steered by Jock Laurie of Aberdeen to what he called the 'Merble Airch'. Before long we were spectators at a

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B.S.P. meeting. Jock said, 'the speaker's gey cauld'. Off he went and how he managed it I had not time to find out before I was hustled through the crowd and found myself making what I suppose must have been the first report back of the first Party Conference, which was received with great enthusiasm. Then to the train, where fate had delivered a *very* orthodox clergyman into our carriage, and did we baptise him!

That was our send-off. What have we to show for our Party over the years? Not enough but still a lot. We played our part in pulling capitalism's hands off Russia. We backed and fought for British Miners when officialdom turned their backs and even their guns on them. We expelled even big Bob Williams for his part in the Triple Alliance betrayal of the miners. The defeat of the miners opened the way for attacks on engineers, textile-workers, seamen, etc. In all of these struggles our members were active. In the heat of these struggles some succumbed and left us for easier paths. We fought the opportunist heritage brought in by local Councillors or personal egoists. The Government of the day soon recognised the new type of Party. Raids were frequent, our General Secretary, Albert Inkpen, was arrested and sentenced, active workers, especially in the minefields, were doing time. Our organisation was still lamentably weak and sectarian. Printers were blackmailed into refusing to print our articles and pamphlets. We started our own printing works. Our editors faced libel and sedition charges, so that we needed a double shift, sometimes a treble one.

By 1924 we had our first taste of Labour Government, rather sourish at that. Johnny Campbell put the cat among the pigeons and very much upset MacDonald & Co. By 1924 we began to put new life into the trade unions through the Minority Movement whose secretary was Harry Pollitt, later Arthur Horner. So 1925 opened new economic battles. Government was compelled to subsidise mineowners and assume emergency powers. To prepare for the next round they arrested twelve of our leading members. They were found guilty of conspiracy to utter seditious libels. Six, with previous convictions, were given twelve months. Six were offered release if they would forswear their allegiance. But one and all refused and served six months' sentences. Further attacks on the miners were more than decent workers were prepared to put up with, so came the General Strike and wholesale arrests, office raids. This greatest confrontation of the classes in

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Britain in our time sent their leaders shivering to sell the pass and leave the miners to their fate. Fierce punishment befell the workers in consequence of this betrayal. Victimisation was common and hard, hard times kept knocking at the door. The miners survived their desperate ordeal. . . .

1929. Once again a Labour government which succumbed to American capitalist pressure. The defection of MacDonald, Thomas and Snowden and their descent into a 'National Government' did not stop the economic rot. Unemployed relief was cut to the bone. These tested our membership and they withstood the pressure and nobly headed or fought in the ranks of the unemployed, joined in hunger marches, fought the police and won concessions. Meantime the German monopolists had been set on their feet again by American and British investments. But being unable to rule in the old way, they washed out the remnants of democratic practice and forged a rod of iron for Hitler to wield while they cheered him on to the fight against the growing Soviet power. Fascism reared its black flags in Britain too, but the working class showed its strength and routed it. In 1935 we scored a real Parliamentary success by the return of William Gallacher who by his Communist attitude did much to add to his own and the Party's prestige. We led the fight and formed the British section of the International Brigade which saved the honour of the British working class in the battlefields of Spain. 1939: that fatal year that saw the outbreak of that most vicious war of the centuries. Here also our Party gave freely of its dearest and best to bring the war to a victorious end. When it ended the British workers' stored-up anger burst through to the defeat of Churchill and placed their hopes on the Labour Government, which shooed them off with meagre reforms and played a sorry second fiddle to American big business so that once again our Party is leading the fight against further war.

Now we have established the Party as a potent factor in British politics. Our numbers have grown. We have lost many brave and able leaders but we have raised able successors. Our camp of Peace grows daily and despite provocation we know that the forces of Peace will prevail. All our efforts are turned in that direction. Our literature is improving daily. Our *Daily Worker* is known the world over. We are no longer the feeble body of propagandists that we were in 1920 but a strong virile Party worthy of the class we find it an honour to serve.

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SOCIALIST REALISM IN AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE

Judah Waten

A SIGNIFICANT feature of the current literary scene in Australia is the considerable and growing number of socialist realist writers. Socialist realism, i.e. realism combined with belief in and support for socialism is professed by most of the members of the Societies of Realist Writers which are to be found in almost every state in Australia. These writers vary greatly in style; their works are artistically different but ideologically close. In the last decade or so at least half a dozen novels and collections of short stories from them have won acclaim both in Australia and abroad: and the writings of Katharine Susannah Prichard, Frank Hardy, John Morrison and Ralph de Boissiere have been translated into many languages. They are highly regarded in the Soviet Union where their work has appeared in considerable editions and in magazines with big reading publics. Of one of the latest novels by a socialist realist writer, Dorothy Hewitt, *Bobbin Up,* a novel of women textile workers in Sydney, *The Times Literary Supplement* wrote on November 27, 1959: 'Miss Dorothy Hewitt is one of the new generation of novelists that is bringing vitality to the Australian literary scene'. *Bobbin Up,* like a number of other such novels, was published by the Australasian Book Society, an organisation of writers and readers with a seven years record of publishing and encouraging Australian writers, socialist realist and others. It has organised fourteen inter-state tours by authors lecturing to readers in halls and factories on their own books and on Australian literature. Of the twenty-four titles published by the Society as members' selections and the other supplementary volumes of interest not solely by socialist realists, the most popular have been the work of Katharine Susannah Prichard, Frank Hardy, John Morrison and Dorothy Hewitt. Perhaps in no other English-speaking country are there such active groups of socialist realist writers as in Australia nor is there anything equivalent to the Book Society with its two thousand to two and a half thousand members, a large percentage of whom are workers, and its additional one thousand to one and a half thousand readers who buy one book at a time from the bookshops. Editions have generally been between three and four thousand—not inconsiderable in any English-speaking country.

The majority of the socialist realists are short story writers, the

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short story being a traditional Australian medium. Quite a number are worker writers who have produced stories and sketches of their work places in the building industry, abattoirs and railways. Over the years many of these stories have appeared in the Communist Party and trade union press as well as in various literary publications. There is also a number of poets and playwrights in the Societies of Realist Writers and some are well known to the Australian public. The significance of socialist realism and the achievements of the writers are recognised by all schools of literary opinion. Today there is not a study of modern Australian literature which does not make mention of the work of the socialist realists. Writing on 'Trends in Australian Literature' in *Voice,* Sydney, January 1956, Tom Inglis Moore, a member of the Commonwealth Literary Board, poet and lecturer in Australian literature at the Canberra University, said:

> The main trend continues towards social realism, using the term in its broad literary sense... The trend to social criticism inherited from the nineties also continues unabated. Indeed a number of left wing writers have sharpened the criticism.

Socialist realism springs naturally from the realism which is the dominant trend in our literature, the result of the whole course of Australian historical development. The earliest fruits of this literature were bush ballads and short stories more like yarns. These were the songs and tales of convicts and of drovers moving cattle and sheep in the great unfenced inland. From the very beginning it was a realistic literature of the common people filled with a spirit of defiance. Most of the significant writers in this period were strongly influenced by the ideas of chartism widely held in Australia for half a century. This was the case with Henry Parkes and with Raffaello who wrote *The Eureka Stockade,* a colourful and realistic account of the most celebrated battle for independence in Australian history, an event written about by Karl Marx in his article, 'News from Australia'. By contrast with these writers and the bush balladists, the authors most admired by the upper classes the landowners and the colonial governors' circles, modelled themselves on the worst melodramatic English novelists and had nothing but contempt for the Australian reality. Here was born the second trend, the reactionary trend in Australian writing.

The upper classes and their newspapers hated the young, realistic, indigenous literature which they first tried to ignore and then later derided as they have never ceased to do. But by the end of the

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nineteenth century, Australian literature was firmly established, an independent literature in the English language not a mere offshoot of English literature. The 80's and 90's are particularly memorable. This was the period of the struggle for Federation, the great shearers' and maritime strikes, and the establishment of the Labour Party that was to win parliamentary victory before any other Labour or Social-Democratic Party in the world. The whole ferment was reflected in the work of Henry Lawson, Australia's greatest literary figure (1867-1922) and the other leading writers of the time. This group, the school of the nineties as it is called, in the first golden age of Australian writing, was inseparable from the Labour movement, from the first socialist movement of which the writer William Lane was the most outstanding figure. Bernard O'Dowd, Joseph Furphy, Victor Daly, all believed in the ideal of socialism and the last living survivor of that school, Dame Mary Gilmore, the famous poet, now in her 95th year, still contributes a weekly column to the Communist Party weekly, *Tribune*. Arthur Parker, the friend and workmate of Henry Lawson, has left it on record that during the maritime strike, Lawson took him round to join the Australian Socialist League in Sydney, and he wrote that Lawson's 'whole soul was in his writing and his hopes for Socialism'.

The school of the nineties, harbinger of the modern socialist realist school, disintegrated with the disillusionment that set in among the writers after the establishment of federation and the first Labour Governments in Australia. The dream that the Labour Party would usher in the new socialist age dissolved in the face of reality; the Labour Governments were busily building Australian capitalism then rapidly becoming a junior partner of British imperialism. The revival of realism came after the Russian revolution and the foundation of the Communist Party in Australia. The ideas of the Russian revolution exercised a profound influence on a new body of writers just making their appearance before the Australian readers. The most significant of these expressed sympathy with the Russian revolution that revived hopes of the victory of socialism and pointed the way to a new life. They included the poet, Furnley Maurice, Louis Esson, the founder of the Australian drama, and the prose writers Vance Palmer and Katharine Susannah Prichard who were instrumental in restoring the realistic short story and novel. With her novel, *Working Bullocks*, in 1926, Katharine Susannah Prichard, who was also a member of the Communist Party, began the new school of socialist realism. Just as the writers of the nineties were inspired by the Labour move-

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ment of the time, so modern socialist realists find inspiration in the Communist Party, the only party of socialism in Australia. In the *New Statesman* (January 23, 1960) J. B. Priestley, who recently visited Australia, rightly observed that a 'surprising number' of writers were Communists.

In the epoch between the two wars socialist realism extended its influence, particularly after the First Congress of the Soviet Writers, an event widely discussed in the Writers' League, a pre-war precursor of the Societies of Realist Writers. One of the most distinguished figures in the Writers' League was Alan Marshall who wrote many stories of working class life for the left-wing press and the English *Left Review* as well as a novel of factory life, *How Beautiful Are Thy Feet.* Then immediately after the war came the realist societies embracing some former members of the Writers' League but consisting mostly of new writers, including ex-soldiers who had begun to write during the war. Many of the first published stories by members of these societies were about the war in the Middle East and the Islands. A then member of the Melbourne Realist Society, Eric Lambert who wrote the best selling war novel, *The Twenty Thousand Thieves,* subsequently passed into the reactionary camp, one of the very few writers to succumb to the revisionist onslaught. The socialist realists have introduced many new themes into the Australian literature, extending its subject matter that had formerly tended to deal with the life of the itinerant worker, small settler and drover, rather than the factory worker and city dweller. Because of the support for this new trend in Australian literature, the ruling classes and their press in recent times have begun to pay more attention to Australian literature. Critics in the daily press and lecturers in literature at the universities where until recently Australian literature was hardly mentioned, have begun to encourage more vigorously those writers who belong to the reactionary trend—American imitators and obscurantists.

But socialist realism advances, new works by socialist writers keep appearing and the capitalist press feels obliged to review this work, even paying grudging tributes. This year will see new works by Hardy, Waten, John Morrison and De Boissiere. *Follow the Sun* by Ron Tullipan, a new Queensland writer and former wharf labourer, is shortly to be published by the Australasian Book Society and the work of new short story writers is to appear in a magazine to be issued by the Society of Realist Writers in Sydney. The torch that was lit nearly forty years ago by Katharine Susannah Prichard is burning more brightly than ever.

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STRIKE FOR THE PENSIONERS !

George Hardy

DELEGATES to the Old Age Pensioners' Federation Conference broke into resounding cheers when they heard that the Boilermakers' Society was calling for a twenty-four hour strike to enforce justice for the pensioners. Happy indeed were the old folk to learn that a vital union had given a correct lead to the whole labour movement, a lead which received endorsement by the delegate Conference of the much-maligned Electrical Trades Union before being submitted for endorsement by delegates to the Trades Union Congress

Prior to the general election each party campaigned for the old age pensioners' vote. In general terms the Tories promised that pensioners would certainly 'enjoy a share in prosperity'. As election results showed Labour's promise of an immediate 10s. rise proved unattractive. Only the Communists have a practical programme against the scandalous treatment inflicted upon elderly folk—over five million of them—who throughout a lifetime of hard labour produced the nation's wealth.

What did they get? Next to nothing! Reluctantly the Minister restored the five shillings deducted from those in receipt of National Assistance when the 10s. swindle was perpetrated against the O.A.P.s. When not content with filching the above 5s., the scrooges also at the same time took away the tobacco coupon, worth 2s. 4d., from the poor old folk, reducing the so-called 10s. rise to two shillings and eightpence. Little wonder that pensioners are fed-up and cynical, particularly when some M.P.s and defeated Labour candidates tell O.A.P.s they are getting what they voted for. Many pensioners now see themselves as political shuttlecocks for election purposes. They want action now—not empty promises.

This decision for a national stoppage has elevated pensions on to a new stage, making the pensioners' demand for an increase a broad working class issue. Self-interest demands workers of today defend the old age pensioners; are they not the pensioners of tomorrow? More and more workers are realising this. It is implicit in the Boilermakers' call for direct action—the only action the Government understands. Implicit too is the conscious feeling of what awaits the workers upon retirement. Think of what it means: recently published official figures gave £14 odd as the weekly average earnings for men and around £7 for women (a case for equal pay!). Even the millions on low wages (if we fail

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to add present day pensioners) will be plunged into ever deeper poverty on £2 10s. 0d. for a single person and £4 for a married couple. And herein lay the justification for the Federation of Old Age Pensioners' demand for £4 for both man and woman alike, making £8 for a married couple.

For a measure of poverty—not only among pensioners—every delegate to the Blackpool Trades Union Congress should carefully study the recent Report of the National Assistance Board. It covers 2,500,000 people. Nearly half, or close on a million and a quarter, are old people. Of 1,766,000 weekly grants, 976,000 are to people on retirement pensions; 118,000 are non-contributory pensioners, whilst 119,000 are old people not receiving any kind of pension. Besides, many in dire want refuse to apply for assistance.

As a direct consequence of the Rent Act alone 260,000 of these were forced to apply for National Assistance grants, passed on to greedy and unscrupulous landlords who at once raised rents beyond ability to pay. Thus the Government grants become subsidies to the landlords from public funds rather than an adequate increase to the pensioner.

Although treatment of the aged in Britain is among the worst in Europe the Government has the audacity to urge workers due for retirement to go on working. By this exhortation, if obeyed, they affect a double saving for the Treasury: (*a*) on Insurance stamp contributions, and (*b*) weekly payments on pensions. Having worked and reached 'three scores and ten', even with small additions to the pension, it is safe to say that few live long enough after retirement to retrieve their losses. Thus it is clear who are the benefactors. In this respect let us consider health facts of those entering retirement. An H.M.S.O. publication (1954) states that 25·2% of the men retiring at 65 do so because of chronic illness and 25·8% were suffering ill-health. Large numbers are regularly found in the overcrowded doctors' surgeries. From their meagre pensions they must now pay for all prescriptions, item by item, and often amounting to three or four shillings, a situation envisaged by the late Aneurin Bevan when he resigned as Minister of Health, and, mark you well, under a Labour Government.

On this background another dodge has emerged: pensioners are urged to take up part-time employment at a shilling an hour. No one can blame the O.A.P.s trying to enhance their miserly pensions; but not as cheap labour which must receive wholehearted condemnation of all trade unionists. In such cases T.U. rates must be paid. The only real solution is an adequate pension.

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However, each time the Minister of Pensions is approached with this demand a blank refusal is given. They are told National Assistance is open to all in need. Resentful of the Minister's foul attitude many O.A.P.s in need reject his proposal. Proudly they link National Assistance with paupers, poor law relief, and the 'work house'. When told they are entitled to all they can get, invariably they answer, 'I would rather starve!' They rightly demand security, and security does not mean only food, clothing and shelter—but a guaranteed standard of living from want and worry until the end of their lives. To exist on an indefinite future and consequent worry gives rise to hypertension and leads to nervous instability among tens of thousands of elderly folk.

This is also why the Boilermakers' Society's resolution is so important. Many more examples could be given to justify action now. Swedish old age pensioners receive equivalent to £4 a week for a single person and £8 6s. 0d. for a married couple. Mr. C. Bjorklund, of the Swedish Old Age Pensioners' Association, speaking at the O.A.P. Conference at Skegness reported a 'gradual increase until 1968, when a single person will receive about £8 a week and a married couple about £11' and 'no Means test'. (*The Old Age Pensioner,* July issue.) West Germany is also far ahead of Britain. In the U.S.S.R. no one received less than 50% of their average wages, going much higher in accord with services rendered. Even China, hampered by a backward economy, is far ahead of Britain, with *Homes of Respect for the Aged* established in both rural and urban areas which care for those without relatives.

As representatives of monopoly tycoons the Tory Government asks: where is the money to come from to meet increased pensions? The answer is clear: from the fabulous profits increasing year by year, and by cuts in expenditure for war preparations. The Chinese have solved this problem by a direct assessment on industry for social security services. 'Where there's a will there's a way'. To implement the Boilermakers' Resolution a tremendous campaign must be launched immediately covering every unit of the Labour and Co-operative Movement, starting from the Trades Union Congress. Pensioners are indeed grateful for support expressed in many resolutions adopted at National Conferences. They provide an ample basis for immediate action, and brook no delay.

Above all else there is need for organic unity between members of the O.A.P. Federation and the rest of the Labour movement on all levels. Magnificent examples of joint activity exists already in London, Scotland and Manchester on behalf of the old age

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pensioners. The 1958 Dunoon Conference of the National Federation of Old Age Pensioners decided to support the formation of joint Committees of O.A.P.s and Trade Unions in every region. Given a lead from the Trades Union Congress and the Federation of O.A.P.s and the National Executives of the trade unions the rank and file would at once respond in forming joint Committees. I see no reason whatever why such joint Committees should not, in accord with the Constitution of the O.A.P. Federation, pay their half-crowns and become affiliated.

Exasperated pensioners are ready for action. They will respond and co-operate wholeheartedly to make the Boilermakers' call for a 24 hours stoppage a reality. Divorced as they are from industry, their hopes have been raised. Don't let the pensioners down! On with the fight!

VIEWS OF THE WORLD

Hiroshima Day in Yorkshire

THROUGHOUT the world, August 6 is remembered with horror as 'Hiroshima Day', the day in 1945 that we experimented with 100,000 human 'guinea pigs'. The experiment was successful and we killed most of them. The thousands of others, who were only mutilated beyond all recognition as human beings, must often have felt that they were the unlucky ones to have been left alive. Today many of these people are still existing—may we never forget them. Today parents are still giving birth to lumpen monstrosities. No-one knows how many generations will continue to have children in fear.

In Yorkshire we have a proud record of disarmament activity, of which remembrance of 'Hiroshima Day' is an important part. In conjunction with the Japanese Consulate, the Bradford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament organised a 'Motor Cavalcade', which consisted of a loudspeaker car, an eye-catching float and a contingent of well postered cars, each fully laden with eager pamphleteers. The plan was to tour the area that would be devastated if a 10 megaton bomb were dropped on Bradford Town Hall. At the main towns in this area, the Cavalcade stopped, leaflets were distributed and the crowds were addressed through the loudspeaker. Local C.N.D. members were waiting to assist us in most towns, a sign of the organisational effort put in. At Halifax we were greeted by the ever welcome sight of the 'Halifax Trades Council' banner: what a fine record of peace demonstrations this banner has!

The effects of constant propaganda on the man-in-the-street were easy to see. Everywhere we went we were well received. Many more people seemed to stop and think about the situation than did in the early days, when unilateralists were treated as a bunch of cranks. After a full day of a hundred miles tour, we returned to Bradford and a welcome tea at the Friends' Meeting House. In the evening a meeting

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was held in the Mechanics' Institute, Bradford, where the film *'Shadow of Hiroshima'* was followed by speakers John Kere, Dr. Moller, Dr. Grunwald and Mr. John Rowbottom: a fine finish to a day's work.

This was the third major demonstration in Yorkshire in two months, following the protest march from Fylingdales 'Early Warning Station' and the headline hitting 'Operation Finningley'. All the time local activity still goes on. One striking idea was a publicity campaign by Bradford C.N.D. using double size posters in the proprietory hoardings. We are now preparing for what should be the most important demonstration yet— the pre-Labour Party Conference rally at Scarborough. Let us all make this a massive and convincing display of the rank and file desire for peace.

A. M. GASCOYNE,
York.

A New Approach to Peace

(*Following Jim Gardner's article last month,* For a World Without War, *we are glad to print the following letter which raises some questions, a number of which are controversial on the present campaigns. The writer is the North-West Region Treasurer of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, who is also a member of the General Council of the British Peace Committee.—Ed.,* L.M.)

IF the peace movement in Britain is to play its full part in building a world without war, it will have to reach out to far more people—particularly in the Labour movement—than those at present actively engaged in the struggle for peace. To do this it must seize upon and campaign around the key issues. At present these are clearly the provocative U.S. flights and the defence debates at the forthcoming Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference (though we must not allow ourselves to forget such danger points as Germany, the Congo and Cuba). At the moment a wide measure of unity is developing around the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament demonstrations on the eve of the Conferences—the Edinburgh-to-London Campaign and the Scarborough demonstration in particular. Every effort needs to be made to make these as big a success as Aldermaston. The joint committee of trade unions, peace committees and CND groups set up following the Leeds Conference must be strengthened by the support of local branches and shop committees; an effort must be made to follow up with report-back meetings and discussions.

At present, however, unity tends to be one-sided; peace committees support CND activities, but CND groups tend to be chary of supporting activities organised by the British Peace Committee, which is still felt by many to be 'Communist-dominated'. To some extent time and experience alone can cure this; but a real attempt must be made to overcome the barriers. The key seems to be joint discussion of activities at the earliest possible stage (in this lies the tremendous importance of the Leeds committee) and the avoidance of anything which could offend, however 'silly' the offence may seem. For example, CND campaigns against NATO bases and spy flights, but avoids anything which appears 'anti-American'; and that is what seems to me a weakness of the 'Notice to Quit' petition. An obvious essential is clearly more and more committees of the Leeds type

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and, above all, a drive to establish new local committees—perhaps with no particular allegiance?—in the blank spots, of which there are still too many. Above all, the new situation requires a new approach and a realisation that it is better to go part of the way together than all of the way alone.

S. R. BROADBRIDGE,
Manchester.

Sam, You've Changed!

(This open letter to the American neighbour, 'Uncle Sam', by the Canadian newspaper, the 'Vancouver Sun', about the U-2 spy plane, was sent us by a Canadian reader.)

AS a neighbour and friend, Sam, may we have a chat with you across the back fence? Seems we used to talk this way more often in the past, Sam. But since you struck it rich it's been hard to find you at home.

We hate to start out with complaints but, frankly, everybody in the block is still talking about your boy Alan Dulles and his U-2 spy plane. Not only on this block for that matter. The East-enders have got his number too. But you don't seem to think it's anything but a boyish caper. Maybe you don't realise that some of your best friends are maybe going to refuse to let your kids play in their yards any more. And then, your lying about it—somehow that hurts us worst of all. Sure, you've made mistakes before. So has everybody else. But we always felt that whatever else might be said about Sam, he was always a straight-shooter. Nothing fancy about Sam, we used to say. Means well and says what he thinks.

Has all that money you've got made you different, Sam?

And there's that crowd you're running with nowadays.

We know, you say you've got a new standing in the community. Got a position to uphold, you say. Have to be sociable now with people like Franco and Syngman Rhee and some of those war criminals. Got to hold up our end against the East side, you say. But is it worth it? You're associating with people today that your old dad would never have permitted to put their feet under his table, whether they were important to him or not.

See, we knew your folks a long time, Sam. Knew them away back—the tough, old whaling captains from Nantucket, the men who walked the ox-teams across the Oregon Trail, that big homely guy named Lincoln, who had more brains and less brag than almost anybody else we can bring to mind. We knew them all. The Quaker branch and the Mormon branch, the Lafayette Squadron, our own boy Alexander Graham Bell, who married into your family, Chief Crazy Horse and Robert E. Lee. They were very simple people, Sam. The Europeans used to laugh at them because they were so unsophisticated. We never laughed at them. We liked your family.

Now you're maybe the biggest man around here and we're worried about you. You don't seem to talk about much except your latest refrigerator, or how big your car is. You don't seem to be interested in digging the garden any more, you seem to be more interested in some fancy woman in Hollywood.

What's happened to you, Sam? Did you get too rich too fast?

THE VANCOUVER SUN,
Canada.

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Railwaymen in Conference: a delegate's view

WHEN my union, the National Union of Railwaymen, met in Conference at Torquay this summer, I was amongst the seventy-seven delegates—my second time. From the point of view of the Left, representative of the rank and file, it was a good conference. To start off, the platform looked to be in a very strong position, having just got settlement of the wage award. But the militant mood of conference was early seen. On the first day an appeal against an E.C. decision to accept an invitation to send a delegation to see how NATO works was passed by 38 votes to 22, although the platform speakers argued that the delegation had already gone and come back. Delegates nevertheless censured the executive for their action and told them in no uncertain terms not to do it again. The result was the more impressive because a similar protest was defeated the previous year.

A highlight was the debate on the Tories' attitude to the British Transport Commission, with speaker after speaker—including the General Secretary—saying Hands off our industry. A delegate from the rails catering and hotels staff, which the Tories would like to return to private hands, made the best speech. Delegates showed their attitude on Clause Four on two counts. First, against strong opposition from the platform, they carried by a majority of six to one a resolution that made it perfectly clear they would accept no modification that would alter our Socialist aims. Then came a second bite at the cherry when they disapproved by a five to one majority the executive's support for the policy document issued by the Labour Party executive.

Then came the much publicised H-Bomb debate. Although it had already been announced to the Press that Labour's Defence Policy Statement would be discussed, delegates refused to discuss this because it was not on the agenda. Instead they debated a straightforward composite resolution calling on Great Britain to renounce nuclear weapons and get rid of American bases, which was carried by 39 votes to 38. Delegates unanimously supported a resolution on West German rearmament which called for no atomic weapons, curbing military preparations and a peaceful solution. Conference took a militant attitude on wages. A resolution calling for a biennial review, which would have condemned railwaymen to tailing continually behind other industries, found delegate after delegate standing up to repudiate this policy Delegates also reaffirmed their support for 100% trade unionism and called for closer working with other trade unions, with the eventual idea of one railway trade union in mind.

After it was all over, one of the full-time officials was heard to say to a Left Wing delegate: 'Well, *you've* had a good conference haven't you?' He was right. On all but one internal question the Left carried the day; and if the NUR delegates to the TUC and Labour Party Conference do their job properly, our 290,000 votes will help to push the Labour Movement back on to the Socialist Road.

BILL SHEPPARD,
Essex.

Taped!

COULD any reader lend us a portable tape recorder?

MANAGER,
Labour Monthly.

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BOOKS

Freedom
Brian Simon
Communist Party. 24pp. 1s.

On the Nature of Freedom
Herbert Aptheker
New Century: New York.
36pp. 35 cents

TWENTY-FIVE years ago the stock argument against communism was 'It's a wonderful *idea* but the trouble is it just won't work'. Today the same sort of people—and sometimes the very same people—now say: 'It works all right but it's a terrible *idea*'. In other words the argument has shifted from the practical/economic to the ideological/moral. In the face of the sputniks and the rate of growth of the Soviet economy it is hard for even the Victor Zorzas to claim that socialism is on the point of collapse; so they have to concentrate on a less tangible line of talk. Freedom is what socialism lacks. Communists are not interested in freedom.

This is why two new pamphlets—one British and one American—from the Marxist point of view are so timely and important. They are both most useful pieces of work and can be relied upon to provoke any amount of thought and discussion.

What will most strike a non-Marxist reader, one suspects, is the historical approach of both writers. They both say, in effect, you can not discuss freedom in the abstract. Freedom is not a beautiful ideal, it is the actual ability of men and women to do what they need to do in order to advance and develop. As Brian Simon puts it (did he have *The Angry Silence* in mind?):

> 'The worker who, in the name of an abstract "freedom" refuses to join a trade union, weakens the working class in its struggle against capitalist exploitation... Such a worker undermines the very conditions for the freedom of his class and therefore of himself. The working class as a whole can increase its freedom only by acting together in solidarity to maintain the freedoms already gained and to extend them further'.

The Marxist answer to the charge that Communists do not care about freedom is not and never can be, to suggest that freedom is not after all so very important. Because Marxists attack and oppose the hypocrisies of ruling-class and idealist attitudes to freedom, this does not mean that they have some better alternative to freedom; it means that they want more freedom than liberals dare even contemplate—the freedom of *all* men to control the world. The most striking difference between bourgeois and socialist attitudes towards freedom, as both these pamphlets show, is that, whereas to the bourgeois liberal freedom is associated with absence of control and seen as the antithesis of power (though in practice liberals have never been hesitant to use power when it suits them), to the Marxist the area of men's freedom is enlarged precisely to the degree that they obtain control over the workings of nature and society and are able fearlessly to wield power on their own behalf.

ARNOLD KETTLE.

An Essay on Economic Growth and Planning
Maurice Dobb
Routledge and Kegan Paul 120 pp. 15s.

A brief review can do no more than hint at the riches that lie hid-

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den in this modestly entitled Essay with which Maurice Dobb once more puts socialists in his debt. His individual contribution is not diminished by the fact that, as he has himself stated elsewhere, Marxists in the socialist world have moved towards similar conclusions. The essay is concerned to develop the tools required for analysing economic growth especially in planned economies. It provides both an advance in Marxist theory and a critique of the theories on whose basis there flows a constant stream of 'expert advice' to former colonial countries. Some of the book's riches are easily got. The first two chapters contain an illuminating comparison of the effects of the aims and social structure of capitalism and socialism upon their potentialities for growth, and expose the speciousness of the 'textiles first' path so often presented as an alternative to the 'unnecessary' hardships incurred by the USSR in giving priority to heavy industry. The central chapters discuss how resources should be allocated between consumption and investment and within the investment sector, what techniques of production should be chosen and how the choices made affect the growth rate and employment. Here the gold is much more densely packed and harder won, even for the full-time economist. But a decade from now, when currently fashionable cold-war products on economic growth are where they belong—in the dust-bin, Marxists and non-Marxists alike will still be fruitfully and gratefully quarrying here.

R. BELLAMY.

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Economic and Financial Aspects of Social Security: An International Survey

J. Henry Richardson

George Allen & Unwin. 254 pp. 30s.

THE author says: 'Because of the high cost of old age pensions, care is needed when adopting systems to resist political pressures that would tend to make them too generous' (p. 92). Our rulers are scarcely in need of such advice, but since this book is intended as an 'international survey' we might have expected the author to reveal some corner of the world where a 'too generous' pension scheme has brought the country to the verge of disaster. But no! Indeed, though the book is packed with information, it is not on the whole very illuminating information. And the opinions are nearly all of the

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variety quoted above. And how much longer do we have to put up with 'international surveys' which virtually ignore what is being done in the socialist countries? The book has one virtue—it avoids the pretentious jargon now fashionable among writers on this subject. The author's ideas may be stuffy, but at least you can understand what he says!

KATHERINE HOOD.

American Foreign Policy

Louis J. Halle

Allen & Unwin. 328 pp. 25s.

FAR from providing an intelligent insight into the formation of his Government's foreign policy, Mr. Halle leaves us wondering what he actually did with himself when he was a member of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff. Roughly seven-eighths of the book is given over to an historical account of America's external policy, dealing with the Monroe Doctrine, the conquest of the Phillipines, etc. His approach is to pose the traditional desire of the American people for peace, democracy and good neighbour relations against certain strategical needs which rendered it impracticable at certain crucial stages. In 1898, for example, he tells us, 'we used our strength as became our liberal tradition, for the liberation of the long-suffering Cubans from Spanish tyranny', which ran counter to isolationist tradition.

The author struggles to organise words to conceal reality, and thus ends by misusing history to justify the reactionary policies of present-day America. He claims that the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine placed America for the first time in fifty years in a 'realistic' relationship to the rest of the world. The 'collapse' of Europe after 1945 forced America to its senses: Britain, Italy and France in 1947 faced total collapse, and 'with the ensuing anarchy and bloodshed, a return to barbarism'. And: 'The communist vultures, one might say, were already beginning to pick on the flesh of a dying Italy and a dying France'. Thus the State Department attempted to justify to its own people the enormous overseas expenditure for military purposes.

COLIN SWEET.

The Red Snows

Sir John Hunt and Christopher Brasher

Hutchinson & Co. 176 pp. 25s.

THIS is an interesting book. It gives a good and clear account of the climbs the British climbers made in the Caucasus, the difficulties of getting there in the first place and their experiences with the Russians on their climbs. The account (enthralling for a mountaineer, especially as the Caucasus mountains are the greatest European range) closes with Sir John Hunt's thoughts and comments on the mountaineers and the mountains, British and Russian, and his hopes for a return visit of his Russian colleagues so as to show them what British mountaineers are like and to introduce them to climbing friends at home, and so 'multiply the contacts between ordinary folk like ourselves... Therein lies the best hope of realising a true brotherhood of man.' To someone who is not a mountaineer it is also of great interest. On the one hand, to note the courage and endurance that mountaineering demands of its

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votaries; and on the other hand, what a hindrance it is to understanding, when none of those concerned, and certainly not Christopher Brasher, have any notion of the forces or the theories of the new society growing up in the Soviet Union: yet at the same time the close comradeship and dependence on one another's skill began to make a break in this inspissated ignorance.

But the actual experience on the mountains did open their eyes to some of the basic realities in the Soviet Union. Brasher comments: 'More and more does one find in Russia that what at first sight appear to be unpardonable restrictions on personal liberties are, in fact, only sensible precautions. Every activity has its organisation, and no doubt in many spheres these are irksome; but, perhaps, in the West we sometimes have too much freedom, when the only controlling force is the moral obligation to one's relations and companions' (p. 59).

In fact we would do well to consider some of the ways of the Soviet Union with regard to mountaineering for our own benefit. For their concern is to see that lives are not uselessly and carelessly thrown away. Brasher says of their rules: 'To climbers in the West who have complete freedom, this at first sight seems a cumbersome and bureaucratic process, but it has much to commend it in a sport which can be so dangerous. The authorities know, if bad weather breaks, where everybody is, how competent the party is, and how much food and equipment they are carrying with them. In mountains as severe and wild as the Caucasus it is an excellent system. Undoubtedly, it does much to keep down the accidents' (p. 58-9). And with mountains as wild as the Cuillins with the hazards of mist and cloud there and in the Lakes and Snowdon, the toll of accidents here should make us look again at our own habits and ways. A final chapter on 'Did the Russians Attempt Everest?' shows that even mountaineering does not escape the attention of the lie-factories. For Brasher was convinced by his knowledge of the Russian mountaineers that the Russians had not attempted to climb Everest (he quotes *The Times* of September 12, 1953, giving extensive particulars); he believed them when they told him that so far they had not done so, for he knew them. So he investigated the various newspaper reports and discovered 'that both those which had emanated from Geneva and those which had emanated from Stockholm had come in the first instance from Berlin'. He adds: 'It seemed more than likely that an East German mountaineer who knew something of Russian climbing had defected to the West and, being short of money, had sold a good story to the Press'.

OLIVE ARNOT.

THROUGH PICASSO'S EYES

What is essential in this time of moral poverty is to create enthusiasm. I am a Communist so that there will be less misery.

(*Pablo Picasso*)

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(Continued from page ii of cover)

reader singles out a different feature: 'The summing up on trade union and political questions is tops'. And what a tremendous response there has been to the August number, with Will Paynter's *Crisis in Coal* and Jim Mortimer's unanswerable case for nationalisation, *Prospect for Shipbuilding*. We circularised these two industries in advance and close on 1,000 extra copies were sold. Orders came from mining Area executives and councils, lodges, institutes and working men's clubs in Derbyshire and in Scotland, Durham, Cumberland and South Wales, as well as shipbuilding districts, particularly such as Belfast where there is no small degree of unemployment. And finally we had extra orders, including from Australia, because of the Harry Pollitt Tribute, 'at the heart of a splendid issue', as an English fund supporter puts it. So here are all these people, who either have only read *L.M.* occasionally, or perhaps saw it for the first time in August. A thousand chances to ensure new regular readers! This September issue is just the job for that. For, following the present Miners' Secretary, now we have Arthur Horner, 'the ablest negotiator the miners ever had', according to their arch-enemy, in a unique position to give a retrospect and prospect. Then, too, we have a remarkable article by 'Vulcan', on aims and actions of the Trades Union Congress; informed, informative and hard-hitting, it will prove an education to many, not least our young trade union readers. Here we provide ammunition to win new regular readers—and depend upon you.

A Londoner hopes that the fund is holding up 'during the holiday lull'. If it is, it is due to one or two minor windfalls, like the *Cumberland* reader, who sends part of the 'money which, masquerading under the guise of "postwar credits", and forcibly withheld for nigh on 14 years, has at last been paid without even a whisper of acknowledgement, much less a cent of interest'. This is up to July; the test comes now. And will stamp fans please turn to classified ads on page 430, for details of gifts we have received for the benefit of the fund? July donations totalled:

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